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EXPLORING THE RAINFOREST, A THIRD GRADE THEMATIC UNIT

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Building an interdisciplinary thematic unit for any elementary grade requires collaboration among a team of teachers if one is to truly explore the real world connections and the interconnectedness of a variety of subjects. The creativity is greater when several teachers combine their own strengths and interest areas. This third grade unit incorporates a child's natural curiosity about plants, animals and people into an environmental theme that encompasses the rainforest and environmental issues of conservation that third graders can envision. The subject areas utilized in this exploratory unit include five full mathematics plans, five full science plans, and connections to social studies, language arts, music, and art. The main unit plans are also cross referenced with both the mathematics and science national curriculum standards. Students explore the location of tropical rainforests, rainforest foliage, listen to stories about the rainforest, learn to use graphs as tools to tell visual tales about the rainforest and actually learn to design and create a replica of a rainforest for classroom display.